

Message Text

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ACTION AF-06

INFO OCT-01 EA-06 ISO-00 SAJ-01 SAM-01 OMB-01 CIAE-00

DODE-00 PM-03 H-02 INR-07 L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01

PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 EUR-12 IO-10 EB-07 TRSE-00

FRB-03 CIEP-01 AID-05 /098 W

----- 038686

R 231350Z MAY 75

FM AEMBASSY MASERU

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4896

INFO AMEMBASSY GABORONE

AMEMBASSY MBABANE

AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

AMEMBASSY TAIPEI

CONFIDENTIAL MASERU 548

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1

TAGS: PINT, PFOR, LT, CH, TW

SUBJECT: GOL FOREIGN MINISTER VISIT TO PRC

REF: MASERU 512 (NOTAL)

1. SUMMARY: PRIME MINISTER JONATHAN HAS DEFENDED KOTSOKOANE VISIT TO PRC ON GROUNDS OF LESOTHO'S NEEDS FOR NEW FRIENDS AND SOURCES OF ASSISTANCE. THERE ARE INDICATIONS HE IS PREPARED, EVEN IN FACE OF OPPOSITION, TO CONSIDER CHANGING GOL'S POSITION ON ROC/PRC ISSUE IF PRC WOULD BE SUFFICIENTLY GENEROUS IN PROVIDING AID TO LESOTHO.

2. SPEAKING AT LARGE PUBLIC MEETING AT QUTHING, SOUTHERN LESOTHO, ON MAY 18, PRIME MINISTER JONATHAN JUSTIFIED FOREIGN MINISTER KOTSOKOANE'S VISIT TO PRC ON BASIS THAT LESOTHO MUST PURSUE OUTWARD LOOKING FOREIGN POLICY TO GAIN NEW FRIENDS AND SOURCES OF ASSISTANCE. HE SAID LESOTHO COULD NOT MAINTAIN A STATIC FOREIGN POLICY WHILE OTHER NATIONS OF DIFFERING IDEOLOGIES WERE ENGAGED IN DETENTE. SAID LESOTHO FOLLOWS

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A DYNAMIC POLICY OF MAKING FRIENDS AMONG OTHER NATIONS

REGARDLESS OF THEIR IDEOLOGIES AND FORMS OF GOVERNMENT
AS LONG AS SUCH FRIENDSHIPS DO NOT INTERFERE WITH LESOTHO'S
INTEGRITY, BELIEFS, AND FORM OF GOVERNMENT.

3. REACTION AMONG GENERAL PUBLIC TO KOTSOKOANF'S VISIT,
NEAR AS EMBASSY CAN GAUGE IT, IS SURPRISE AND DISAPPROVAL.
WIDELY READ SESOTHO LANGUAGE PAPER LESELINYANA, PUBLISHED
BY CATHOLIC CHURCH, RAN FULL TEXT OF UNATTRIBUTED PAMPHLET
WHICH HAD APPEARED ON STREETS OF LESOTHO ATTACKING VISIT,
THUS ASSURING PAMPHLET WIDE DISTRIBUTION. GIST OF PAMPHLET
IS THAT VISIT TO PRC BY A GOVERNMENT MINISTER IS BETRAYAL
OF ANTI-COMMUNIST POSITION ON WHICH JONATHAN AND BASUTOLAND
NATIONAL PARTY (BNP) RAN AND WON ELECTION OF 1965, LAST
ELECTION HELD IN LESOTHO AND ONLY BASIS FOR BNP'S REMAINING
IN POWER.

4. ACCORDING TO PRESS AND RADIO REPORTS, KOTSOKOANE HAS
BEEN WARMLY RECEIVED IN CHINA. AT BANQUET IN HIS HONOR
GIVEN BY PRC FOREIGN MINISTER, TWO MINISTERS REPORTEDLY
EXCHANGED CONGRATULATORY TOASTS IN TERMS USUALLY USED BETWEEN
NATIONS WHICH ALREADY HAVE RELATIONS. KOTSOKOANE REPORTEDLY
ALSO HAS HAD INTERVIEW WITH CHOU.

5. ROC MISSION IN LESOTHO APPEARS TO BE SERIOUSLY CONCERNED
ABOUT IMPLICATIONS OF KOTSOKOANE'S VISIT BUT IS CONDUCTING
BUSINESS AS USUAL. ROC AMBASSADOR LIU HOSTED VERY LARGE
RECEPTION MAY 21. IN HONOR OF VISITING 23-MAN INVESTMENT MISSION
FROM TAIWAN; SEVERAL HIGH-RANKING GOL OFFICIALS, INCLUDING
DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER, WERE IN CONSPICUOUS ATTENDANCE.
(LIU STILL BELIEVES KOTSOKOANE VISIT IS BEGINNING OF PATTERN
OF CLOSER TIES BETWEEN LESOTHO AND COMMUNIST COUNTRIES; HE
CLAIMS TO HAVE INSIDE REPORTS THAT KOTSOKOANE ALSO PLANS TO
VISIT NORTH KOREA AND SOVIET UNION AND THAT GOL WILL ESTABLISH
RELATIONS WITH CZECHOSLOVAKIA.)

6. AN INDEPENDENT RELIABLE SOURCE HAS CONFIRMED THAT SPLIT
IN CABINET OVER ISSUE OF KOTSOKOANE VISIT WAS ALONG LINES
REPORTED REFTEL AND ADDED THAT MINISTER OF JUSTICE C. D.
MOLAPO WAS ALSO OPPOSED. THIS SOURCE ALSO CONFIRMS THAT
ANTI-VISIT PAMPHLET WAS PUT OUT BY BNP MEMBERS AND WAS
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WRITTEN BY MOLAPO.

7. SEPARATE SOURCE WHO IS POSITION TO KNOW HAS INFORMED
EMBASSY THAT KOTSOKOANE WILL REQUEST PRC ASSISTANCE IN BUILD-
ING NEW INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT NEAR MASERU. IN ADDITION,
THERE ARE RUMORS THAT KOTSOKOANE IS CARRYING LONGER SHOPPING
LIST INCLUDING WATER DEVELOPMENT SCHEME AND EXTENSIVE ROAD
CONSTRUCTION.

8. COMMENT. MOST INTRIGUING QUESTION, WHICH EMBASSY CANNOT ANSWER, IS ONE OF PRIME MINISTER JONATHAN'S POSITION ON VISIT. THERE SEVERAL INDICATIONS HE ONLY RELUCTANTLY AND BELATEDLY APPROVED VISIT. ON OTHER HAND, IT UNLIKELY HE WOULD HAVE GIVEN APPROVAL, ESPECIALLY IN FACE OF SUBSTANTIAL PARTY OPPOSITION, UNLESS HE HIMSELF WAS IN FAVOR. IF, AS SEEMS LIKELY IN LIGHT OF HIS SPEECH AT QUTHING AND FACT THAT KOTSOKOANE WILL REQUEST ASSISTANCE FROM PRC, HE IS CONSIDERING WHETHER PRC OR ROC WOULD BE MORE HELPFUL FRIEND, HE PRESUMABLY IS PREPARED TO CHOOSE PRC IF IT IS WILLING TO PROVIDE SUFFICIENT ENTICEMENT. ANY PRC AID OFFER WOULD HAVE TO BE SUBSTANTIAL TO ENABLE PM TO OVERCOME OPPOSITION WITHIN AND WITHOUT PARTY TO CHANGING SIDES ON ROC/PRC ISSUE. ANOTHER QUESTION TO BE ANSWERED IS WHETHER PRC COULD, IN PRACTICE, ESTABLISH AN EFFECTIVE AID MISSION IN LESOTHO, GIVEN NECESSITY OF ACCESS THROUGH SOUTH AFRICA AND DIFFICULTY LESOTHO WOULD HAVE IN MEETING "LOCAL COSTS" WHICH WE UNDERSTAND IS COMCOMITANT OF PRC AID.

9. ACTION REQUESTED: EMBASSY IS REFRAINING FROM COMMENTING ON OR BEING DRAWN INTO SPECULATIVE CONVERSATIONS ABOUT KOTSOKOANE VISIT. IF WE WERE EMPHATICALLY TO EXPRESS OPPOSITION TO LESOTHO'S RELATIONS WITH PRC, IT WOULD PROBABLY CARRY SOME WEIGHT WHEN AND IF GOL EVER DELIBERATELY CONSIDERS PROS AND CONS OF CHOOSING BETWEEN PRC AND ROC. REQUEST DEPARTMENT'S AND AMBASSADOR'S ADVICE AS TO WHETHER WE SHOULD CONTINUE TO REFRAIN FROM COMMENT.

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